

US 60 CORRIDOR DEFINITION STUDY  
PINAL COUNTY CORRIDORS DEFINITION STUDY  
WILLIAMS GATEWAY CORRIDOR DEFINITION STUDY  
Contract T0449-0001

**JOINT MEETING OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

**August 16, 2005**  
**Williams Gateway Airport Administration Building**  
**Human Resources Development Center**  
**5835 S. Sossaman Road**  
**Mesa, Arizona**  
**1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE**

Larry Quick, *Town of Florence*  
Michael Milillo, *Town of Gilbert*  
Roger Herzog, *MAG*  
Tim Oliver, *Maricopa County*  
Ken Buchanan, *Pinal County*  
Bill Leister, *CAAG*  
Ron Grittman, *City of Apache Junction*  
Luana Capponi, *Arizona State Land*  
Alton Bruce, *City of Coolidge*  
Wayne Balmer, *City of Mesa*  
Patrick Pittenger, *City of Mesa*

Mark Young, *Town of Queen Creek*  
James Moline, *GRIC*  
Stuart Boggs, *Valley Metro/RPTA*  
Mike Normand, *City of Chandler*  
Rick Powers, *ADOT*  
John Pein, *ADOT*  
Andy Smith, *ADOT (US 60 and  
Williams Gateway DS Project Manager)*  
Dianne Kresich, *ADOT (Pinal County  
Corridors DS Project Manager)*

**Consultant Staff in Attendance**

Dave Perkins, *Kimley-Horn & Assoc.*  
Brent Crowther, *Kimley-Horn &  
Assoc.*

Pete Lima, *Lima & Associates*  
Thomas Herz, *Lima & Associates*  
Hugh Louch, *Cambridge Systematics*

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

A joint Technical Advisory Committee Meeting of the US 60 Corridor Definition Study, the Pinal County Corridors Definition Study, and the Williams Gateway Corridor Definition Study was held on August 16, 2005 at the Williams Gateway Airport Administration Building at 5835 S. Sossaman Road in Mesa, Arizona. The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. and adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Andy Smith opened the meeting and thanked all for their attendance. Andy presented the agenda for the meeting. Agenda items included an overview of the purpose of the corridor definition studies, the results of the needs analysis, presentation of preliminary corridor concept, the preliminary results of the feasibility analysis, and an open TAC discussion of preliminary corridor concept.

## **2. Corridor Needs Analysis**

Dianne Kresich stated that she would present the needs analysis findings. She requested that questions and comments be held until her presentation is complete, after which she will address specific questions regarding the needs analysis. She also stated that each consultant will have an opportunity to present specific findings from the feasibility analysis. In addition, the Arizona State Land Department will provide an update of their planning efforts for the study area and Carol Oaks, Kaneen Advertising, will provide an update for the upcoming open houses.

Dianne began her review of the needs analysis by stating that the Pinal County Planning Model (PCPM) provided a common needs analysis tool for all three studies. The PCPM combines information from MAG, Pinal County, and local jurisdictions. Several scenarios were tested in the PCPM that led to the development of the preliminary Corridor Concept that was then subjected to feasibility analysis. Dianne summarized the needs analysis findings:

- Corridor segments for which the 2030 projected traffic volumes does not justify the need for a new freeway facility include:
  - East Valley corridor, west of Queen Creek (approximately Val Vista Road)
  - East Valley corridor, east of the North-South corridor (North-South corridor to Florence Junction)
  - Williams Gateway east of the North-South corridor
  - North-South corridor, north of the Williams Gateway corridor and south of the US 60. However, traffic volumes on this segment are significant enough such that local jurisdictions (Apache Junction, Pinal County) may consider developing this segment as a parkway facility.
  - North-south corridor south of SR-287.
- While additional roadway capacity is needed in the Queen Creek area, a freeway corridor along the Riggs Road or Hunt Highway alignment would not solve the congestion issues in Queen Creek. Modeling scenarios in which the East Valley corridor is modeled through the Queen Creek area did not demonstrate significant benefits to other roadways in the Queen Creek area. Specific roadway improvements that are needed in the Queen Creek area could be addressed through the upcoming Queen Creek Small Area Transportation Study.
- Corridor segments for which a new freeway facility is justified are:
  - Williams Gateway corridor from the Pinal County line to the N-S Apache Junction/Coolidge corridor.
  - North-South corridor extending from Williams Gateway corridor to the Florence area. The freeway could connect to SR-79 or to SR-287.
  - Reroute of US 60 near Gold Canyon, east of Mountain View exit to milepost 205.
- Access management strategies are recommended for the existing state highway system including:

- US 60 from approximately milepost 207 south to Florence Junction.
- SR 79 from Florence Junction to SR 287.
- SR 287 and SR 387.
- SR 587 from I-10 to SR 287.
- SR 87 from I-10 to SR 287.
- Corridor protection (by county and local jurisdictions) is recommended for the future extension of corridors (post 2030).
- Dianne stated that ADOT assist in funding Small Area Transportation Studies in the Queen Creek, Florence, Coolidge, and Eloy areas. Dianne also stated that the upcoming Regional Transportation Profile Study for state highways in the Pinal County area will address many of the transportation needs within northern Pinal County. Finally, the upcoming Statewide Access Management Plan will provide support for corridor access preservation.

Following presentation of the needs analysis findings, TAC members were asked for comments and specific questions regarding the needs analysis findings. TAC comments and questions are summarized below:

- Stuart Boggs (Valley Metro/RPTA) asked if all of the corridors (as proposed in 2003 Southeast Maricopa Northern Pinal Transportation Study) were modeled into the PCPM, and specifically if the Hunt Hwy segment was modeled as a connection to I-10. Dianne answered that all of the SEMNPTS corridors were initially modeled, and that they did connect to I-10.
- City of Mesa staff stated that there are questions regarding socioeconomic data. City staff stated that it is difficult to determine, for the Williams Gateway corridor in particular, why the model depicts a sudden decrease in vehicle trips east of the north-south corridor. City staff does not think that the land use data are correct.
- Roger Herzog stated that MAG did perform some model runs for the year 2030 and that the traffic volumes were comparable to the PCPM. However, he stated that the State Lands area has the potential for nearly 1,000,000 people. He believes that using traffic volumes as a strict criterion is short-sighted. The state land area provides a significant opportunity to preserve right-of-way. As such, ADOT should begin to preserve right-of-way for the corridors that connect to the US 60 and Williams Gateway areas. Dianne stated that the 1,000,000 estimated is for the year 2050.
- Roger Herzog stated, as an example, that when the Loop 202 was proposed in 1985 the volumes dropped considerably on several segments. They could have dropped the freeway, but that did not make sense from a regional connectivity issue. There needs to be regional connectivity.
- Dianne stated that the population projections were presented to the TAC in March, and the TAC agreed that they were the most accurate available.
- Hugh Louch stated that the corridor concept as proposed is a regional system, and that connectivity was considered when planning the system.
- Dave Perkins stated that it is not entirely accurate to state that traffic projections were the only consideration. When you consider land use plans, drainage issues, and the diagonal development pattern, it is evident that development will be less on areas east of the CAP than for the Williams Gateway area. The study's initial findings reflect existing and future travel patterns in the study area that generally moves from the southeast to the northwest.

- City of Mesa staff asked if it is ADOT's position is that we can wait until the year 2030 to preserve a corridor. Dianne stated that it is up to the local jurisdictions to begin to preserve right-of-way for a future corridor. Corridor protection is important between now and the year 2030. As an example, the City of Apache Junction is reserving 300 feet of right-of-way for an arterial that can be upgraded to a freeway facility in the future. The study will emphasize that corridor protection is important.
- City of Mesa staff stated that the study could designate corridors as phase I, phase II, etc. implying future corridors. The corridors could be designated as 'future transportation corridors' for planning purposes, and would address connectivity needs beyond the year 2030. MAG and CAAG are setting up a meeting to discuss this issue further.
- Tim Oliver stated that the three studies were charged for making recommendations for the year 2030, and the 'future transportation corridors' are not needed in the year 2030.
- Dianne Kresich stated that the area south of Coolidge is another area that should be slated for corridor preservation.
- Wayne Balmer, City of Mesa, stated that as regional connectivity is an important consideration, how does ADOT propose to connect the corridor to SR-79, and if interchanges will be constructed.
- Andy Smith stated that assuming the corridor concept is accepted by the State Transportation Board, there will be additional studies that will look at each of these issues.
- Rick Powers asked if turn-back is being considered for any of the corridors. Dianne responded that if new corridors are constructed, responsibility for certain existing state system roads is likely to be transferred to the county or local jurisdictions.

### 3. Feasibility Analysis

Andy Smith presented the preliminary findings for the feasibility analysis. He explained that the purpose of the feasibility analysis is to identify constraints, opportunities, fatal flaws (if any), and to define the corridors to the extent possible. Feasibility components include engineering, environmental, socioeconomic, land use, and community concerns. Preliminary feasibility findings are:

- Engineering:
  - Recommended corridors cross undeveloped State Trust land;
  - Acceptable locations for construction of corridors exist;
  - Connections between corridors (e.g. interchange), and to existing highways, have not yet been determined. In addition, the connection for the southern terminus of the north-south corridor has not yet been determined (SR 79 or 287).
  - Crossing of the CAP canal could present engineering and environmental challenges.
- Environmental:
  - Drainage studies by State Land Department will influence the specific location of future highways and arterials;
  - Mitigation will likely be required for drainage and other environmental concerns (wildlife species, archeological sites, recreation, etc.).

- Socioeconomic, Land Use, Community Concerns:
    - Integration of corridors with local development is needed;
    - Right-of-way preservation, access management, and further studies are needed.
  - Pinal County and local jurisdictions support US 60 re-route and N – S corridor;
  - Pinal County and Apache Junction support N – S parkway south of US 60;
  - Opposition from local residents to any improvements to or near Hunt Highway.
- Andy presented specific feasibility findings applicable to each corridor:
- North-South corridor:
    - Northern segment - Locate along CAP canal;
      - i. CAP must be accommodated by future development;
      - ii. Recommended SRP 500 kV utility corridor is adjacent and west of CAP;
      - iii. Corridor is compatible with CAP and SRP uses;
      - iv. Corridor location west of CAP is preferable from drainage perspective.
    - Southern segment - Link to SR 79:
      - v. Opportunity to transition to SR 79 via undeveloped Magma Dam area;
      - vi. Transition to SR 287 would impact planned communities and require Gila River Bridge in culturally sensitive area.
  - US 60 reroute – MP 199 to MP 205:
    - i. Need new right-of-way;
    - ii. Coordination with State Land Department is critical;
    - iii. Mitigation of drainage and environmental resources required;
    - iv. Strong support from residents and local governments.
  - Existing US 60 alignment – MP 205 to MP 212 (SR 79):
    - i. May need right-of-way at interchange areas;
    - ii. Coordination with State Land Department is critical;
    - iii. Access management strategies critical;
    - iv. Mitigate impacts on adjacent land use and resources.
  - Williams Gateway Corridor
    - i. In Maricopa County, corridor encompasses the MAG preferred alignment along Frye Road and Alternative 7 along Ryan Road;
    - ii. In Pinal County, corridor extends east to the junction with the N – S corridor.

Wayne Balmer asked if opposition to the Hunt Highway corridor (East Valley Corridor) was localized or if it was along the entire corridor. Dianne stated that opposition to the corridor was particularly strong through the Chandler Heights and Sun Lakes areas.

Pete Lima offered additional details from the US 60 feasibility findings.

- The US 60 reroute would extend from the existing US 60 freeway at MP 199 to the Renaissance festival.
- Apache Junction and Gold Canyon residents have expressed strong support.
- There is approximately 300 feet ROW currently between MP 205 and MP 212. Additional right-of-way may be required at interchange locations.
- This section is already designated as an access controlled highway.
- Support from State Land and Pinal County is needed to maintain access control.

Dave Perkins highlighted additional details for the North-South corridor feasibility findings:

- Drainage generally flows from a northeast to southwest direction.
- The CAP is a major existing drainage feature. Locating the North-south corridor along the CAP would serve both development to the west and east of the CAP,
- This alignment alternative is consistent with travel desires – it would provide mobility in a southeast to northwest direction.
- Fissures, subsidence, and archeology resources will be engineering challenges for any corridor definition alternative.
- Development has generally occurred in a west to east pattern. Development in general has been west of the CAP.
- The approved SRP 500 kV route along the west side of the CAP provides an opportunity for the corridor.
- At the southern end of the north-south corridor, the major issue is proposed development and master planned communities.
- We will be reviewing the recently approved SRP 500 kV transmission line corridor to determine if this alignment provides additional opportunities.

Comments and questions related to the feasibility area summarized below:

- Wayne Balmer suggested that dashes be added to the portion of the MAG WG freeway east of the county line to illustrate that the eastern-most mile of the corridor is in Pinal County.
- Alton Bruce is not enthusiastic that the corridor is not being extended to I-10. He believes that the corridor would provide an alternative route to Tucson.
- Dave Perkins stated that recommended corridor alternatives still would be beneficial to both Coolidge and Florence and would not preclude continuation of a corridor to the south of SR-287.
- Ron Grittmann asked, as it pertains to the US 60 reroute, if we are beginning to see too many facilities too close to each other?

#### **4. Preliminary Recommendations**

Dianne summarized preliminary recommendations that may be presented to the State Transportation Board:

- New corridors as state routes;
- Upgrade existing non-interstate state highway system;
- Implement access management;
- Transfer certain state routes to local governments;
- Integrate multiple modes within corridors;
- Mature local arterial system is needed to support new corridors;
- Strong support from public, agencies, and stakeholders;
- Develop partnerships and share costs.

Comments and questions related to the preliminary recommendations are summarized below:

- Rick Powers emphasized that the funding of the corridors needs to be addressed.

- City of Mesa staff asked if there would be any recommendations made for future corridor protection.
- In response to a question about recommendations regarding future transportation corridors, Dianne stated that information concerning future extension of the corridors will be available in the studies.

## **5. Update from Arizona State Land Department**

Luana Capponi provided an update of planning activities being conducted by Arizona State Land Department. She stated that the current Morrison Institute study will provide 3 white papers.

- Lost Dutchman heights include about 275 square miles. Planning for this area will be complete by the end of 2006. By August, 2007, ASLD will have preliminary recommendations relating to infrastructure needs, including drainage, for the larger area (127,000 acres).
- ASLD prefers that the corridor be located on the west side of the CAP. This will result in less segmentation of property, minimize mitigation costs, minimize drainage costs, and improve security of combined utilities. ASLD prefers that SRP and ADOT utilize right-of-way adjacent to each other.

## **6. Update of Public Open Houses**

Carol Oaks presented details of the upcoming public open houses. Open Houses will be held in Apache Junction, Queen Creek, Gilbert, and Florence. The TAC is encouraged to attend.

- Wayne Balmer stated that he would like all of the information that will be presented at the open houses to be available on ADOT's website.

## **7. Next Steps**

Working Paper No. 2 will be presented to the TAC. The TAC will be given two weeks to review Working Paper No. 2 prior to the next, and final, TAC meeting.